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# **2008 Maryland Nursing Facility Family Survey**

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## **Guide to Reading and Understanding the Results of the Family Survey**

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## **I. Introduction**

In 2005, the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) initiated a survey as part of a multi-year process intended to measure the experience and satisfaction of family members and other designated responsible parties of residents in Maryland's nursing homes. The specific goals of this project have been to provide: 1) measures of responsible party experience and satisfaction; 2) comparisons on experience and satisfaction measures between nursing homes in Maryland; and 3) comparisons between nursing home peer groups, defined as nursing homes in the same geographic region, nursing homes of similar bed size, and the nursing home profit type (for-profit or non-profit).

This report presents results for the 2008 survey for each nursing home with a sufficient number of responses. The report also includes trending results which compare the 2008 results to those in the 2007 survey. The results can be used as a management tool for use by nursing home staff by identifying areas where an individual nursing home excels or areas where improvement is needed.

## **II. How the Survey was Conducted**

All nursing homes in Maryland that had one or more residents with stays of 90 days or longer were included in the survey. Each nursing home provided a list of designated responsible parties for each resident who was currently residing in the nursing facility. A responsible party is most often a family member, a spouse or a child, but also can be non-relative such as a friend. It is important to remember responsible parties of residents with a stay of less than 90 days were not asked to participate in the survey, therefore, the experience and satisfaction of the responsible parties of people who need short-term skilled nursing care or rehabilitation following an acute hospital stay are not captured by the results of this survey. There were several nursing homes in Maryland that had only short stay residents, therefore, those facilities were not included in the survey.

A survey packet consisting of a letter requesting participation in the survey and the questionnaire was sent to each designated responsible party whose resident(s) met the eligibility criteria. After this initial mailing, follow-up efforts were made in order to insure all responsible parties had the opportunity to respond.

## **III. The Sample**

A total of 223 nursing homes throughout Maryland participated in the 2008 survey. In all, surveys were mailed to 17,109 responsible parties. A total of 9,645 eligible respondents returned a survey for analysis which resulted in an overall response rate for all facilities of 59%.

The response rate is the total number of surveys returned by eligible respondents divided by the number of respondents to whom surveys were mailed minus surveys returned as undeliverable by the post office.

## **IV. The Survey**

Designated responsible parties completed a survey about their experience and satisfaction with the nursing home facility and the care provided to residents. The 2008 survey contained 25 items organized into five areas, called domains, which assess aspects of residents' life and care:

- Staff and Administration of the Nursing Home
- Care Provided to Residents
- Food and Meals
- Autonomy & Resident Rights
- Physical Aspects of the Nursing Home

Within each domain, respondents rated different aspects of residents' life and care. Respondents also rated two items measuring overall impressions of the facility.

There were some differences between the 2007 and 2008 survey. The 2007 survey contained 58 items organized into seven domains. While the 2007 survey was also designed to measure a responsible party's overall experience and satisfaction with the nursing facility, the decision was made in 2008 to simplify the survey instrument with the goal of reducing respondent burden and improving survey response rates. Therefore, a number of questions and two domains were dropped in 2008. The two domains that were removed from the most recent questionnaire include:

- Quality and Variety of Food
- Activities Available to Residents

Aspects of these domains were incorporated into other parts of the survey.

## **V. Glossary of Terms Used in This Report**

### **Domains**

The 2008 Maryland Nursing Facility Family Survey contained 25 items designed to measure a responsible party's overall experience and satisfaction with the nursing facility as well as within specific areas of care, specific services, and the environment. The areas, or domains, are:

1. Staff and Administration of the Nursing Home
2. Care Provided to Residents
3. Food and Meals
4. Autonomy & Resident Rights
5. Physical Aspects of the Nursing Home

### **Peer Groups**

For the purpose of making comparisons, facilities were divided into three peer groups: (1) facilities in the same geographic region; (2) facilities of similar licensed bed size; and (3) for-profit/non-profit facilities. Peer groups and statewide averages provide benchmarks by which you can compare facility results to those of other similar facilities. Results for all peer groups are presented in the charts and tables.

## **Region of the State**

Locations for peer group comparisons are based upon counties within Maryland. The regions are listed below and include:

Western Maryland: Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties  
Montgomery: Montgomery County  
Southern Maryland: Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties  
Central Maryland: Baltimore City; Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard Counties  
Eastern Shore: Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties

## **Size**

Nursing home size categories were calculated from licensed bed size counts. There are four size categories: 1) eighty or fewer beds, 2) 81-120 beds, 3) 121-160 beds, and 4) more than 160 beds.

## **Ownership Type**

Nursing homes were categorized as for-profit or non-profit ownership types to allow for peer group comparisons.

## **VI. Reading and Interpreting Scores**

Each facility-specific report shows the facility results categorized in different ways. First, the report provides average scores for overall satisfaction items, domains, and individual survey items. Determination of an actual average would require surveying the entire population of responsible parties, which is not practical. For this reason, the results show an average score. Second, the report provides peer group comparisons by region, licensed bed size, and profit type. Additionally, if a facility participated in the survey in both 2007 and 2008, an additional chart and table is included that compares the facility's score in 2008 with its score in 2007.

To assist readers in better understanding results, this report also includes tests of statistically significant differences.<sup>1</sup> These tests are designed to help determine: 1) whether the facility's scores are higher or lower than statewide scores; 2) how the facility compares to peers; and 3) if there has been an increase or decrease in scores since 2007. You will see any differences noted under the column heading "Significant Difference" in the tables.

The tables in each facility-specific report have a column labeled "Significant Difference," which will help you compare the facility's average score to that of the state or peer group. If the facility's score is significantly higher than the state, peer group or 2007 score at a 95% confidence level, then you will see an up arrow (↑) in that column (the state/peer group column). If the facility's score is significantly lower than the state, peer group or 2007 score at a 95% confidence level, then you will see a down arrow (↓). The cell will be blank if there is no statistically significant difference.

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<sup>1</sup> \* Usually we think of the word "significant" as meaning "important"; in statistics, "significant" means probably true (not due to chance). When statisticians say a result is "highly significant," they mean it is very probably true. They do not necessarily mean it is highly important. (Adapted from definition written by Creative Research Systems downloaded March 2009).

In comparing 2008 to 2007, an up arrow (↑) means that the facility is performing better in 2008 than in 2007 on the specific measure. A down arrow (↓) means that the facility is not performing as well in 2008 as it did in 2007. In comparing results to the state or a facility's peers, an up arrow (↑) means that the facility is performing better than the state or peer group on the specific measure. Likewise, a down arrow (↓) means that the facility is not performing as well as the state or peer group.

The domain scores in this report are averages on a scale of 1 to 4. The domain scores are calculated by averaging the scores on the four-point scale (where 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Usually, and 4=Always) across all valid items, or questions, within that domain. This resulted in an average domain score that ranged from 1 to 4. A low domain score indicates a low level of experience or satisfaction within a particular aspect of care and life, such as physical aspects of the nursing home, while a high score indicates a high level of experience or satisfaction. Higher scores are better.

The overall satisfaction questions were rated in a different way. One of the overall scores is an average on a scale of 1 to 10 where the number 10 represents the best or highest rating and the number 1 represents the least or lowest rating. The second overall satisfaction question, "If someone needed nursing home care, would you recommend this nursing home to them?" had the options of Definitely Yes, Probably Yes, Probably No, and Definitely No. The results table shows the percentage of respondents that answered "Definitely Yes" and "Probably Yes."

## **How to Read This Report**

Each facility-specific report has three types of scores reported: areas of care or domain scores, overall scores, and scores for each item or question in the survey. There are tables and charts that display the facility's scores for the five domains and two overall measures. Each domain/overall measure contains a bar chart that displays scores for the nursing home as well as scores at the state and each peer group level for 2008. The Maryland statewide average is presented as a vertical line in these charts. Below each chart is a table that displays the average score, the confidence intervals and whether any significant differences exist between the nursing home and the state and peer groups. Peer groups include geographic location, size, and profit type.

## **Interpretation of Charts**

In each facility-specific report, Figure 1.1 shows all the domain scores for the facility so that you can visually compare scores across all five domains. If the facility participated in the 2007 survey, then the 2007 results are also included in this table for comparison purposes. Figures 1.2 to 1.6 allow you to compare 2008 domain scores to those of the entire state and to the facility's peer groups. These figures provide the facility's average score, the statewide average, and average score for peer groups based on their geographic location, size, and profit type.

## **Interpretation of Tables**

Table 1.1 in the facility-specific report presents similar data as Figure 1.1 in a different format. This table allows you to compare the facility's average score across all five domains. Tables 1.2 to 1.6 show the facility's domain scores for each of the five domains and allow you to compare each domain score with:

- The statewide average.
- Peer groups based on geographic location, size determined by number of licensed beds, and profit type.

The tables in this report were designed so that you can see the average scores and also determine if these scores differ from the facility's peers or the state as a whole. To assist with this interpretation, tables 1.1 to 1.6 have a column labeled "Significant Difference" that will contain an up arrow (↑) or a down arrow (↓) if significant differences exist.

## **VII. Domain Scores in the Facility Results Summary Report**

The following charts and tables compare average scores for the facility with statewide and peer group scores. Note that comparisons of overall satisfaction scores are presented in Section VIII.

- Figure 1.1 Domain Scores for SAMPLE HOME
- Figure 1.2 Staff and Administration of the Nursing Home
- Figure 1.3 Care Provided to Residents
- Figure 1.4 Food and Meals
- Figure 1.5 Autonomy & Resident Rights
- Figure 1.6 Physical Aspects of the Nursing Home

## **VIII. Overall Satisfaction Scores**

Two questions were included in the survey to measure a responsible party's overall satisfaction with the facility. Figure 2.2 displays the facility's satisfaction scores on the question of overall care satisfaction along with state and peer group averages.

One overall item score (Figure 2.3) is the percentage of respondents responding "Definitely Yes" and "Probably Yes" to whether they would recommend the nursing home.

As with the individual domains, a figure and table is presented comparing the facility's 2007 and 2008 scores for each overall measure of satisfaction. Tables and charts comparing the 2008 facility score to the state and peer group scores are provided separately. Differences are noted in Tables 2.1 to 2.3 with an up arrow (↑) or a down arrow (↓) to allow you to see scores where the facility score is significantly higher (↑) or lower (↓) than its 2007 scores, the statewide score, or the score of peer groups.

Figures 2.1 through 2.3 show overall satisfaction scores for the facility compared to the entire state and peer groups.

- Figure 2.1 Overall Satisfaction Scores (2007 vs. 2008)
- Figure 2.2 Overall rating of care received at the nursing home
- Figure 2.3 Would you recommend this nursing home?

## **IX. Item Level Scores**

This section provides a summary of each of the items that are used in calculating the five domain scores. Questions were evaluated using either a 4-point scale (1 meaning “Never” to 4 meaning “Always”) or as Yes/No options.

In addition, there were two questions that evaluated the overall experience and level of care provided by the nursing home. Item scores were calculated by averaging responses for each question across all respondents, resulting in a score ranging from 1 to 4 (1 to 10 for the overall measure) or, in the case of Yes/No questions, the percentage of those responding “Yes” or “No.” Responsible parties who indicated they did not know, were unsure, or that an item was not applicable were not included in these calculations.

The facility item level scores table classifies the survey items by the different areas of life and care. The scores listed under the header "2008" represent the current facility scores. For purposes of comparison, the table includes the facility's 2007 scores (if applicable) as well as the statewide average. As with the domain scores, significant differences between the facility and its 2007 scores or the state scores are noted with an up arrow (↑) or a down arrow (↓).

Please note that questions in italics are ones that were used in the domain calculations. Also note that any item with less than 10 responses has been suppressed for confidentiality purposes. A “NR” in the score column indicates that an item has not been reported due to insufficient response.